

Michigan League for Nursing

2011 Nursing Student Scholarship Essay

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I love to learn. My fascination is rooted in an insatiable curiosity to know and branches into many areas. However, I have found that the two most appealing and rewarding areas of knowledge are to learn about people's lives, and to learn about the intricate balance in maintaining the health of people's bodies. Nursing offers a powerful intersection of these two, the psychosocial and physiological, in a way that surpasses many careers. We as nurses are given the opportunity to evaluate and be responsible for creating an environment of holistic well-being for our patients, and this reaches beyond the membranes of the cells and the integument of the body. Not only that, but we are perpetually challenged to further that knowledge. As a dynamic field, nursing requires us to seek out new and enriching experience to add to the foundation we create in school. This is true whether we are learning more about the dreams of an oncology patient who returns multiple times for treatments and remissions, or learning to recognize the subtle messages of the body as it presents and reacts to the variety of nursing interventions we provide. Nursing is always new. For those who seek to challenge themselves with fresh perspectives, nursing is your place.

Sometimes there is talk amongst new nurses about that first night. All the hours of preparation are behind you: school, graduation, passing your boards and finishing orientation at your first job, and now it is your first shift 'alone'. The gravity of the new responsibility in your hands may seem overwhelming, but this is the time to pause and consider another reason that nursing is unique. The nurse, whether fresh out of school or with three decades of experience, is never alone. We are welcomed into a team which will always be present. Nurses are integral participants in the healthcare community. As the advocate for our patient, we become the funneling point for many services:

respiratory therapists, dieticians, aides, physicians, social workers and more. For those who seek to engage with a team, nursing is your place.

The third and most powerful reason that I am proud to call nursing my career finds me waxing philosophical. Through my clinical ventures into nursing specialties, from labor and delivery to hospice, I am continually reminded of the nurse's presence in the bigger picture. We are invited to be at the interface between people and the most powerful moments in their lives. Vulnerability knows no strangers when a life is entering or exiting this world, or when people hear news that will radically alter their lives. To recognize the honor and privilege of this insight into the human condition should be the continual goal of each nurse, and from that recognition a rich and genuine compassion can grow. For those who seek to engage with the human condition in its most raw moments, nursing is your place.